

DULUTH AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION MEETING
Monday, June 16, 2008 - 5:00 p.m.
Room 402 City Hall

Members Present: Ron Boshey, Antonette Dickenson, Donna Ennis, Anthony LaDeaux, Warner Wirta

Excused Absent: Michele Gordon, Joycelyn Dorscher, Dr. Robert Powless

Absent: Beatrice Kitto, Ricky DeFoe

Staff present: John Judd

Others present: See sign-in sheets. .

Commission Secretary, Donna Ennis, chaired this meeting as both co-chairs were out of town.

CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Motion by Warner Wirta, seconded by Ron Boshey, to approve the agenda. The motion was unanimously approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MAY 19, 2008 MEETING:

Motion by Warner Wirta, seconded by Ron Boshey, to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2008 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

COMMUNITY PUBLIC FORUM / OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

The U.S. Census Bureau is opening an office in Duluth in October and hiring managers. Ms. Chatten-Reynolds, Assistant Regional Director, and Ms. Skaff, Area Manager from the Kansas City Office, spoke about the general importance of the Census and how it is very important to get a good count of Duluth's minority community. They will be working to recruit people to work. Mayor Ness is forming a task force to work in Duluth and has designated Keith Hamre to organize that group. Judd will keep the Commission informed. The past census response in the City has been good. A separate unit is making a special effort and dealing directly with the tribal governments for the Census on the reservations. The Census Bureau is trying a new system to remain more up to date during the interim years. A packet of information was left behind to share with the Commission.

Indian Center Project Update and Discussion – Sherry Sanchez-Tibbetts said that AICHO expects to close on the property for the Indian Center in the next week. The project has been awarded a Tribal Governments foundation Grant of \$150,000. This is

the first time this grant has gone for an off-reservation project. The Mille Lacs Band Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin has been in contact with Mdewakanton Shakopee Sioux regarding their funding of the project and we should hear soon about that result. Tibbetts thinks the remaining “gap” in funding should be made by the end of the year.

Irene Antelope – She relocated to Duluth from Oklahoma to improve life but she states that she was arrested by police without cause while out walking. They thought she was intoxicated and she did not give test consent and was not read her rights. She was taken to detox, put in chained restraints then taken away finally charged (obstruction of legal process) and jailed then released.

She believes that she is being harassed because of charges she brought three years ago against a boy and his family who had taken advantage of her daughter and took her grandchild out of state. Conflict continues with these persons and her daughter. She has been and is currently homeless due to her daughter’s efforts to have her banned from HRA housing.

She has sought help from various agencies; the City Human Rights Office had a conflict of interest, but no one has been able to help her solve her long-term problems. Sanchez-Tibbetts will help her with housing; LaDeaux will get her information regarding what she can do about her recent arrest.

Cruz Mendoza – Provided copies of an article from the Minneapolis newspaper regarding the school board and representatives of the black community reaching an agreement for teaching a culturally specific program for black students. The Agreement is based on one developed previously with the Minneapolis American Indian community. Mendoza will try and get information on that agreement for relevance to the Duluth School situation and bring it back to the Commission.

Verna Cyrette - Duluth resident for 33 years. She admits she has some mental illness, but that she still sees much racism in the way the State and City of Duluth institutions treat Indian people. Her boyfriend has been in the criminal system since September, 2006, and has been bounced around facilities and is now in Anoka State Hospital. In 2004 she was wrongly accused of shoplifting at the old Plaza IGA and was harassed in a racial profiling incident but she settled out of court in her favor.

She is also aware the there are unnecessary medical procedures being performed on Indian people at St. Mary’s Hospital.

Bill Morrison is starting an office here in Duluth as the Red Lake Band Urban Office Representative. He is just getting organized and would like to have anyone who knows of local programs that benefit the Indian community to contact him.

Greg Price – Dropped off information regarding size of the signage for the Bi-aus-wah Bridge (to honor of Native Veterans). The signs currently in place, on both ends of the bridge, are much smaller than what had been proposed and he wants the Commission to look into it.

OLD BUSINESS:

Spirit Mountain Recreation Area Master Plan Process - Renee Mattson sent copies of the Master Plan to the Commission and along with an invitation to a special review and comment session prior to the regular public meeting on June 25, from 1 to 3 pm.

Wirta would still like to invite Will Munger and/or Lisa Augustine (members of the Spirit Mountain Authority), to a future Commission meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Natural Environment Issues (Barrels in Lake Superior) - Wirta read his letter to the Duluth News Tribune editor. It goes along with an article in the Nukewatch Quarterly, copies of which he brought to the meeting. He also read part of his letter to the editor from November. Wirta sees the "Health Consultation" from the Minnesota Department of Health (05/31/08 DNT article included in packet) as a fraud and a cover-up. He feels that we should support John LaForge, the author of the article in Nukewatch.

Ennis noted that the Red Cliff Band is still working to identify and raise some of the barrels dumped in Lake Superior.

Warner has talked to "Montana" at Red Cliff reservation and he would like to have Judd contact Red Cliff and John LaForge and invite them to the October Commission meeting.

Initial Planning for Duluth Indian Community Forum - Discussion regarding where and when to hold the Forum. A Thursday in August, either the 14th or 21st, are the alternative dates. The desired place is Trepaniner Hall at the YWCA building. Sanchez-Tibbetts will see which one of those dates the Hall is available. Further discussion of the Forum agenda/format and work assignments for the Commission members was deferred to the July meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, UPCOMING EVENTS AND COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Wirta: mentioned and had handouts about the Walk-a-thon for Lake Superior Barrels being held July 20. He also had copies of an article in the Bois Forte News recognizing his running achievements.

Boshey: had previously spoken about racism complaints at the Port Rehabilitation Center. Things have improved and now they want Boshey to put together cultural

awareness training for their staff. Boshey is working with LaDeaux putting together a training program. Any others who would like to help please contact Boshey.

LaDeaux: The St. Louis County collaborative group is working together as ambassadors to the Reservations to work with young men in an outreach program. Members of the Duluth African-American community have been contacting him about common issues.

Ennis: Expressed concerned about the possible closing of the City's Human Rights Office and encouraged Commission members and the general public to let the City administration know their feelings about the importance of the office.

Judd: LaDeaux has delivered a draft outline for the Civilian Review Board and it is being reviewed by the City administration and Police Chief Ramsey. Also, once a date and place for the Forum has been confirmed we need to get public relations out to promote it.

NEXT MEETING/DATE/LOCATION: JULY 21, 2008, Room 402 City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:30 P.M.